

THE DWASTRE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health,

1919.

STOWMARKET:
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To the
Chairman and Members
of the
Thedwastre Rural District Council.

STOWMARKET,

March, 1920.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present to you the Annual Report on the health of the Rural District of Thedwastre for the year ending December 31st, 1919.

**NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS
OF THE DISTRICT.**

Population.—(Census 1911) 9018. (Estimated 1919) 8528.

Physical Features and General Character of District.—Inland—generally flat—watered by a few small streams—soil of a mixed character, mostly fertile and well cultivated, with several small woods and some pits of chalk, gravel, flint, sand and brick earth.

Social Conditions.—Occupation of inhabitants almost entirely agricultural; but district contains one Bacon Factory, one Bat Factory and 2 small Brick Works. There are 20 villages, no town. There are no large estates, the district being mainly divided into small farms, few exceeding 300 acres.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Birth Rate 20.52 per 1000.

Birth Rate.—There were 175 births in 1919 (males 100, females 75), giving a Birth Rate of 20.52 per 1000 for 1919, compared with 16.43 in 1918, 14.56 in 1917, and 20.4 in 1916. The Birth Rate for England and Wales was 18.5 in 1919.

There were 18 illegitimate births.

Death Rate 13.92 per 1000.

Death Rate.—There were 114 deaths (males 50, females 64), giving a Death Rate of 13.92 per 1000 for 1919, compared with 15.8 in 1918, 17.11 in 1917, and 14.0 in 1916. The Death Rate for England and Wales was 13.8 in 1919.

Infant Mortality 51.42 per 1000.

Infant Mortality.—There were 9 deaths of infants under one year of age, giving an Infant Mortality of 51.42 per 1000 nett births for 1919, compared with 107.91 in 1918, 61.53 in 1917, 39.0 in 1916, and 96.0 in 1915. The Rate for England and Wales was 89.0 in 1919. Of these 9 deaths, 5 were registered as "Premature Birth" (4 of them twins), and 2 as "Malformations," thus 7 out of 9 being due to Ante-Natal causes.

Other Causes.—There were 8 deaths from Influenza, 7 from Pulmonary Tuberculosis, 2 from other Tuberculous Diseases, and 19 from Cancer.

. The Vital Statistics have been based on a population of 8528 for calculating the Birth Rate, and of 8137 for calculating the Death Rate, as given by the Registrar General for the year 1919.

Poor Law Relief—The number of paupers and scale of relief accord with the average of the country.

Hospitals, &c.—There is no hospital in the district, but serious cases requiring hospital treatment are sent to the County Hospital at Bury St. Edmunds. Other forms of gratuitous medical relief are utilised to a small extent.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

Water.—The water supply of the district is derived from wells (mostly shallow) and ponds. The following villages have public wells maintained by the District Council—Ashfield Magna, Beyton, Hinderclay, Rattlesden and Woolpit. The Council also maintain public ponds at Rattlesden and Drinkstone. The supply is generally adequate and the quality fair. Some sources are liable to contamination by surface drainage, if tenants of adjoining dwellings, &c., neglect the same, and in some cases notices have been served in respect thereof.

Rivers and Streams.—These are small, and there is not much pollution; but action has been found necessary during exceptionally dry periods.

Drainage and Sewerage.—There is not much drainage worthy of the name, and the usual methods of sewage disposal is by discharge into open ditches and cesspools. The cottages are generally without drainage. Parts of Elmswell and Woolpit are sewered. The conditions are not scientific, but the scattered and open character of the district generally prevent any serious nuisances and make any general scheme of sewerage impossible.

Closet Accommodation.—Chiefly privies and pail closets. Orders are given for the conversion of privies into pail closets on discovery of nuisance, and for provision of additional accommodation where found necessary. Approximate number of pail closets, 446 ; privies, 1210.

Scavenging.—There is no collection of house refuse. The usual method of disposal is by deposit in a bumble-hole. Nuisances frequently arise through tenants neglecting to empty these holes when necessary and remove contents to their allotments.

Sanitary Inspection of District.—Number of premises visited, 749 ; defects or nuisances discovered and preliminary notices for abatement served, 116 ; statutory notices, 7.

Result of service of notices.—24 have not yet been complied with. There has been great difficulty in getting the necessary work executed by local tradesmen, owing to shortage of labour and materials, and the difficulty still exists.

Nature of Inspections.—Nuisances caused by accumulations of manure, &c., animal nuisances, ditches used as drains, foul closets, defective privies, defective drains, dirty premises, overcrowding, structural defects of dwellings such as unrepaired roofs, damp walls and floors, absence of eaves, gutters, &c.

Premises and Occupations controllable by regulations.—There are no byelaws in force in the district except in respect of dairies and cowsheds. There are 2 knackers' yards, one bacon factory, and 10 other slaughter-houses. These are frequently inspected and kept in good order.

Schools.—There are 20 public Elementary Schools which were visited during the year with reference to the sanitary accommodation. At Norton it was found that a culvert under the school was blocked, and this was remedied after a lot of correspondence. The water supply is fair. Owing to the comparative freedom of the district from Infectious Disease no special action has been necessary for preventing the spread of such disease with regard to the schools.

FOOD.

Milk Supply.—The district is supplied by local producers, who also export a considerable quantity. The County Police take samples for examination. The supply as a whole is abundant and wholesome. Residents in most cases have to fetch their own milk from the farms.

Milk (Mother's and Children) Order, 1918.—No action has been found necessary under this order.

Other Foods.—At the Elmswell Bacon Factory 11,862 lbs. of meat have been condemned for tuberculosis. There is no public abattoir in the district. The Sanitary Inspector regularly visits the Bacon Factory and other slaughter houses, but owing to the extensive slaughtering done at the Bacon Factory it has been impossible for him to inspect all meat at the time of slaughter. Bakehouses have been inspected and found satisfactory.

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

Infectious Diseases generally.—The following cases were notified during the year:—Measles 5 (1 German Measles); Diphtheria 2; Scarlet Fever 6 (only 3 houses); Malaria 6 (discharged soldiers); Erysipelas 2; Pneumonia 3 (Influenza); Tuberculosis 13 (12 Lungs).

No case made use of the Isolation Hospital.

There is nearly always in this district a difficulty in getting cases removed to the Isolation Hospital, generally obstruction on the part of the parents, and often want of co-operation in the Medical Practitioner concerned. As regards one case of Diphtheria notified at Stowlangtoft, when a visit of inspection was made the following day, it was found that the case had already been removed to London.

There was a marked absence of Diphtheria and Scarlet Fever during the Influenza epidemic in February, March and April, as also in the Influenza epidemic in October and November, 1918. Tuberculosis, especially of the lungs is still very prevalent.

Small Pox.—No primary vaccinations or re-vaccinations have been performed by the Medical Officer of Health under the Public Health (Small-pox Prevention) Regulations.

INFLUENZA.

An epidemic of Influenza returned towards the end of February, reaching its height in March and subsiding early in April. Five deaths occurred during the epidemic (males 4, female 1) aged 76, 70, 10, 6 and $1\frac{1}{2}$ years respectively.

Pamphlets on Influenza had been issued from house to house in November, 1918; home nursing was arranged for in each parish as far as could be done in such a scattered district.

Three other deaths were registered as Influenza during the year after the epidemic had subsided.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

There is no consultation and treatment centre, the parishes being very scattered, but health visitors are employed in this work by the West Suffolk County Council.

DISTRICT NURSES.

The Suffolk Nursing Association have Nurses in most of the parishes, 3 or 4 parishes being linked together for this purpose.

ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

Stowmarket Isolation Hospital serves three districts:—i.e. Stowmarket Urban, East Stow Rural, and Thedwastre Rural, under a joint agreement.

Total number of beds—24, contained in 4 wards.

Total cases admitted during year—22.

From Stowmarket Urban District—Diphtheria 9, Scarlet Fever 1, Enteric Fever 1, and Influenza-Pneumonia 2.

One Death from Influenza-Pneumonia.

From East Stow Rural District—Diphtheria 6 and Scarlet Fever 3.

One Death from Diphtheria.

From Thedwastre Rural District—Nil.

Two Deaths have taken place in the Isolation Hospital this year, and I would like to remind the 3 Councils concerned that we are still without a Mortuary; the difficulty arising from this fact can easily be imagined.

There is no bathroom, either for patients or staff.

There is no provision for artificial light, except by means of oil lamps.

There is a thoroughly up-to-date steam disinfecting plant.

The Hospital is well managed by a fully-qualified Matron who has a probationer to assist.

HOUSING.

General Housing Conditions in the District.—

- (1) Number of houses—2119.
Number of working classes—1737.
New houses for working classes erected during the year, or in course of erection—Nil.
- (2) Population (Estimated for 1919)—8528. No important changes have taken place during the year nor are any anticipated in the future.
- (3) (a) Extent of shortage—It is estimated that 200 houses are needed to meet existing shortage and abate overcrowding.
(b) Measures taken or contemplated to meet shortage—Plans have been prepared or are in course of preparation for 200 houses, and it is hoped that during the summer of 1920, building will be begun in several parishes by the Council.

Overcrowding:—

- (1) Extent—35 Cottages.
- (2) Causes—Insufficient bedroom accommodation and shortage of houses for larger families.
- (3) Measures to deal with overcrowding—The only measure practicable under existing conditions is the provision of new houses with 3 bedrooms. These the Council are taking action to erect. It is impossible at present to abate overcrowding in the majority of cases.
- (4) Principal cases of overcrowding dealt with during the year and action taken.—In one case with 8 persons sleeping in one bedroom, an order was served to abate the overcrowding, and some of the inmates obtained another bedroom in an adjoining house. In other cases the Council were unable to take any action owing to want of other accommodation.

Fitness of Houses.—

- (1) (a) General standard of housing in district—low.
- (b) General character of defects in unfit houses—excessive dampness of walls and floors, insufficient height of bedrooms, &c.
- (2) Action taken under—
 - (a) Public Health Acts—Nil.
 - (b) Housing Acts—under Section 17.
- (3) Difficulties in remedying unfitness—Many Cottages belong to poor persons who are unable to meet high cost of repairs, local tradesmen have more orders than they are able to execute, and necessary alterations in many cases cannot be executed without displacement of tenants, who under existing conditions cannot obtain other accommodation.

Statistics for 1919.—

- (1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which complaints were made that they are unfit for human habitation.
 - (a) By Householders—Nil.
 - (b) By Parish Councils—Nil.
- (2) Action under Section 17 of the Housing Act of 1909.
 - (a) Number of dwelling houses inspected under and for the purpose of the section—90.
 - (b) Number considered unfit for human habitation—90.
 - (c) Number defects in which were remedied without the making of closing orders—Nil.
- (3) Action under Section 28 of Housing Act, 1919.
 - (a) Number of orders for repairs issued—Nil.
 - (b) Number in which repairs carried out by local authority—Nil.
 - (c) Number of dwelling houses voluntarily closed on notice by owner that they could not be made fit without reconstruction—Nil.

(4) Closing orders—

- (a) Number of representations made to local authority with a view to making of closing orders—8.
- (b) Number of closing orders made—7.
- (c) Number of dwelling houses under closing orders made fit for human habitation—Nil.

(5) Demolition orders—Nil.

(6) Number of dwelling houses demolished voluntarily—1.

(7) Obstructive buildings—Nil.

(8) Staff engaged in housing work—Medical Officer of Health and Housing Inspector.

Nuisances reported during the year.—

Accumulations of manure and refuse	...	...	9
Animal nuisances	...	...	1
Ditches	...	...	7
Nuisances from foul closets...	...	...	7
Defective drains	...	...	9
Defective privies	...	...	26
Dirty premises	...	...	3
Overcrowding	...	...	1
Number of privies converted into pail closets	...	...	10
Number newly constructed owing to insufficient accommodation	...	...	1
Other nuisances in connection with houses	...	...	37
Other nuisances in connection with water	...	...	3

116 informal notices were served, 24 of which are still in hand.

In conclusion, I should like to thank the Chairman and Members of the Council for the consideration they have shown me, and the Sanitary Inspector for the information he has given me in connection with his work during the year.

Yours faithfully,

S. C. HOUNSFIELD.

Medical Officer of Health.

THINGOE RURAL
DISTRICT COUNCIL.

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Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE YEAR 1919,

BY

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